

This application claims the priority of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/456,612,
5 filed on March 21, 2003 which is hereby incorporated hereby by reference in its entirety.

The present invention relates to a hanger for supporting round fold articles vertically.

10 More specifically, the hanger supports the round fold article and prevents the article from unfolding while suspending the article vertically.

Various types of hangers are well known in the art such as, hangers that support an article draped over its arms or that support an article folded over a lower arm. Also well known in the art are devices that support an article using a passage formed through the packaging surrounding the article.

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20. Rectangular fold article 10 is then secured in place to prevent it from sliding off hanger

20. One prior art means used to secure the article was to encircle the article, below the

hanger, with a strap 30. Strap 30 surrounds the halves of rectangular fold article 10 and

prevents them from separating slipping off bottom arm 28. Utilizing strap 30 allows a

majority of the article to be exposed so a potential purchaser of the article can view and touch

the fabric of the article. Purchasers typically prefer to touch the material of an article they

wish to buy. The nature of the article's fabric is one of the factors a purchaser typically

considers when buying an article. However, one disadvantage of the rectangular fold hanger is

that the horizontal extent of the hanger is dictated by a folded width "X" of the article. Thus,

the wider the article, the longer the arms of the hanger must be to accommodate the article.

An increase in the size of the article (folded width X) would require an increase in the width of the hanger, which increases the amount of space required to display the article.

To reduce the amount of retail space required to display an article, the article can be

circularly folded. A circular fold article is defined as an article that is rolled into a cylindrical

shape. Figure 2 illustrates prior art for supporting a circular fold article 40 comprising a bag

50 having a top end 52 and a bottom end 54. Article 40 is inserted lengthwise into the bag 50.

Top end 52 is typically sealed and includes a vertically extruding hanger strip 56 having a

central opening 58 through which an article hang rod 59 is inserted. A width "Y" of circular

fold article 40 is less than the width "X" of rectangular fold article 10, wherein $X > Y$ or,

typically, $X \gg Y$. Thus, a circular fold article requires less retail space than a rectangular

fold article to display the same size article. The circular fold article must be fully enclosed to

provide support for the bottom of the article. However, one disadvantage of enclosing the

An additional feature can be used in conjunction with any embodiment of the present invention. The article hanger can further include a header element disposed on the shaft between the hanging element and the article. The header element can be trapezoidal or rectangular in cross section. Advertising or promotional material can be printed on a face of the header element to assist in identifying the article.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

The above and still further objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon consideration of the following detailed description of a specific embodiment thereof, especially when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein like reference numerals in the various figures are utilized to designate like components, and wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a prior art hanger for a rectangular fold article;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of prior art hanging means for a circular fold article;

Figure 3a is a perspective view of one embodiment of the hanger of the present invention;

Figure 3b is a perspective view of the hanger of Figure 3a with a hanging article;

Figure 4a is a perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4b is a side view of the embodiment illustrated in Figure 4a;

Figure 4c is a perspective view of the hanger of Figure 4a with a hanging article;

Figure 5a is a perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 5b is a perspective view of the embodiment illustrated in Figure 5a illustrating the support element in an alternate position;

Figure 5c is a perspective view of the hanger of Figure 5a with a hanging article;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention; and

5 Figure 7 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Figures 3a and 3b show a hanger made in accordance with the present invention. Thus, an article hanger 100 comprises a hanging element 102 and a shaft 104 having a top end 106
10 and a bottom end 108. Hanging element 102 is disposed on top end 106 of shaft 104. Article hanger 100 also includes a support element 110 disposed on bottom end 108 of shaft 104. In use, an article is rolled around shaft 104 to form cylinder 112 and support element 110 supports an end of article 112 such that the cylinder is suspended vertically.

Referring now to Figures 3a, 4a, and 5a support element 110 may have numerous
15 embodiments. Figure 3a illustrates a unitary hanger where the support element 110 is an extrusion of the shaft 104 and is circular. Figures 4a to 4c, illustrate another embodiment of the present invention. Support element 210 is a solid disk 130 including an outer raised circumferential ring 132 and a flat portion 134.

Figures 5a to 5c illustrate another embodiment of the present invention. Support
20 element 310 is pivotally connected to a flat shaft 104a. Support element 310 pivots between a first position approximately parallel to flat shaft 104a and a second position approximately perpendicular to flat shaft 104a. The pivotal connection can include a living hinge 142

between flat shaft 104a and support element 310 or any other hinge or pivotal joint known to those of skill in the art. Thus, pivotally connected support element 310 can pivot approximately flush with flat shaft 104a. Figure 5a illustrates pivotally connected support element 310 in the second position and Figure 5b illustrates pivotally connected support
5 element 310 in the first position.

Additionally, support element 310 can include a notch 312 sized to receive shaft 104 once support element 310 is pivoted parallel to shaft 104. This allows hanger 100 to be stored and shipped flat if the hanger is manufactured separately from the article to be hung. One or more notches 312 can be located anywhere on support element 310 so the pivotal connection
10 can pivot in one or more directions and support element 310 can pivot flush with shaft 104. Notch 312 can be shaped similar to the shape of shaft 104, or any other shape to allow shaft 104 to be received.

Further, support elements 110, 210, 310 can be any shape and size. Support elements 110, 210, 310 can be, for example, circular, rectangular, oval, elliptical, triangular, and
15 polygonal. Additionally, support elements 110, 210, 310 can be sized to approximate the size of article 112 once folded or can be larger or smaller depending on the article.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate an additional feature to be used in conjunction with any of the above embodiments. Article hanger 100 can further include a header element 150, wherein header element 150 is disposed on shaft 104 between hanging element 102 and article 112.
20 Header element 150 can be trapezoidal or rectangular in cross section. Figure 6 illustrates trapezoidal header element 152 and Figure 7 illustrates rectangular header element 154. Product information can be printed on face 156 of header element 150. Both header elements

